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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 BIB-01 EUR-12 PM-05 NSC-05
SS-15 L-03 H-01 IO-13 SSM-03 AID-05 /085 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9882
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USIA FOR IOP/M

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, SA, YE
SUBJECT: TEMPORARY SHUTDOWN OF ARABIC DAILY OKAZ

1. SUMMARY: ARABIC LANGUAGE DAILY OKAZ WASH SHUT DOWN FOR THREE DAYS AFTER INTEMPERATE EDITORIAL ACCUSING US-USSR AND ISRAEL OF CONSPIRACY TO "IMPOSE ZIONIST SETTLEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST" AND FULL PAGE ARTICLE ACCUSING U.S. OF COMPLICITY IN HAMDI ASSASSINATION.

2. ORDER WAS ISSUED EVENING OF OCTOBER 15 BY INFORMATION MINISTER MOHAMMAD YAMANI SHUTTING DOWN ARABIC LANGUAGE DAILY OKAZ FOR THREE DAYS. SAG ACTION APPARENTLY TAKEN BECAUSE OF A DOUBLE-PRONGED, INTEMPERATE ATTACK ON UNITED STATES BY EDITOR RIDA MUHAMMAD LARI.

3. FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL OCTOBER 15 SUGGESTED THAT RECENT EFFORTS TOWARD MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE IN GENEVA REPRESENTED A CONSPIRACY DESIGNED TO IMPOSE AN ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ON ARAB NATION. EDITORIAL LINKS SITUATION IN
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SOUTH LEBANON TO ISRAELI "EXPANSIONIST" AIMS, AND SAYS THAT ISRAEL IS NOW SURE THAT IT WILL GET U.S. AND SOVIET SUPPORT TO CARRY OUT ITS EXPANIONIST OBJECTIVES.

4. FULL PAGE ARTICLE INSIDE UNDER LARI BYLINE SUGGESTS THE U.S. HAS PLOTTED WITH YEMENI ELEMENTS TO GET RID OF PRESIDENT HAMDI, WHO WAS ABOUT TO ESTABLISH A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

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WITH SOUTH YEMEN. "WASHINGTON," THE ARTICLE SAID, "FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH HAMDI, SO SOUGHT A REPLACEMENT." LARI CONJECTURED THAT THE HAMDI ASSASSINATION WAS RELATED TO DAYAN'S CALL FOR INTERNATIONALIZING WATERWAYS AND THUS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN FOR INTERNAL REASONS. HAMDI REMOVAL WAS RESULT OF U.S.-SOVIET PLOTTING (EACH FOR ITS OWN REASONS, AND NOT NECESSARILY JOINTLY), LARI SUGGESTS. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES: WHILE IT IS NOT YET KNOWN WHICH SIDE WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE THROUGH AGENTS IN THE COUNTRY THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A LEFT-RIGHT CIVIL WAR, AS HAS OCCURRED IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

5. CARTOON APPEARING ON BACK PAGE OF OKAZ SAME DATE SHOWS SAUDI LAD ASKING HIS FATHER, "WHO KILLED AL-HAMDI, DADDY?"

6. KEY PARAGRAPHS OF LARI FULL PAGE ARTICLE FOLLOWS:
"ARABS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SAVING YEMEN"

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE RED SEA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN THE UNITED STATES HAS HATCHED A PLOT WITH CERTAIN YEMENI ELEMENTS TO GET RID OF PRESIDENT HAMDI WHO WAS ABOUT TO SET UP SOME CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTH YEMEN. SUCH A STEP CAME BECAUSE WASHINGTON FEARED THAT THE BALANCE MIGHT TILT IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET UNION (SINCE ADEN IS LEFTIST AND SANA IS TO THE RIGHT).

WASHINGTON FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH HAMDI SO IT SOUGHT TA REPLACEMNEMT. HAMDI'S ASSASSINA-
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TION REFLECTED AMERICAN DESIRE TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THE REGION. IF SUCH A SPECULATION IS CORRECT THEN THERE WILL BE INTERNAL CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN AND A LIQUIDATION PROCESS AMONG VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY.

AS A MATTER OF FACT THE UNITED STATES WILL PLAY A ROLE IN THE COMING LIQUIDATION OPERATION IN YEMEN SO THAT THE COMING LEADER WILL BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO HER. THE REMOVAL OF HAMDI FROM THE SCENE WILL WEAKEN ARAB POTENTIALS IN THEIR CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE TIMING OF HAMDI'S MURDER CAME FOLLOWING DAYAN'S CALL FOR INTERNATIONALIZING WATERWAYS, THUS HAMDI'S ASSASSINATION COULD NOT BE FOR INTERNAL REASONS.

IN SUM, THE REMOVAL OF HAMDI OFF THE SCENE CAME AS A RESULT OF AMERICAN-SOVIET PLOTTING (EACH FOR ITS OWN REASONS). THE TRUTH IS NOT YET KNOWN WHICH SIDE HAS ACHIEVED SUCH A THING THROUGH ITS AGENTS IN THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, THIS WILL NOT PREVENT THE POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL WAR IN THE COUNTRY SOON. THIS WAR WILL BE IN THE FORM OF CONFLICT BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT, SIMILAR TO WHAT TOOK PLACE IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

7. COMMENT: OKAZ IS BEST PRODUCED DAILY NEWSPAPER IN

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SAUDI ARABIA AND HAS LARGEST CIRCULATION. PAPER IS USUALLY MODERATTE IN TONE. WE ARE PUZZLED BY ATTACKS ON U.S. SAG OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSED BY THIS INTEMPERATE ATTACK, AND AS APPROPRIATE OCCASION ARISES, WE WILL ASSURE SAUDI OFFICIALS THERE NO TRUTH IN OKAZ STORIES.
WILEY

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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